(b) whether the railways has been able to generally fulfil the demand for special trains during these months every year;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to match the demand of wheat in various States ?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR) : (a) The quantity of wheat transported out of Punjab and Haryana in the months of March, April and May during 1998, 1999 and 2000 is given below :—

(In lakh tonnes)

Month	Ex-Punjab			Ex-Haryana		
	1998	1999	2000	1998	1999	2000
March	3.52	3.84	8.60	1.40	3.33	4.24
April	3.62	4.23	5.73	1.37	2.05	2.26
May	2.97	6.06	3.27	1.08	2.14	1.46
Total	10.11	14.13	17.6	3.85	7.52	7.96

(b) to (d) The supply of rakes by the railways during the relevant period has generally remained satisfactory. The stock position of wheat in various States was comfortable.

Withdrawal of Forces from Siachen

*549. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Summit may lead to withdrawal of forces from Siachen" as appearing in the 'Hindu' dated the 27th June, 2001;

(b) whether of late the Governments of two countries have realised that it is costing them huge amounts in terms of men, money and materials; and

(c) if so, the details of the decision taken in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) to (c) Government are firmly resolved to take all necessary measures to preserve the security and territorial integrity of India. Towards attaining this goal whatever measures are considered necessary are taken.

India has reiterated its desire to resume the Composite Dialogue which *inter alia* includes an official level dialogue on the subject of Siachen.

Re-opening of Highways with Bangladesh and Pakistan

*550. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the highways Government propose to re-open with the neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan;

(b) whether Government propose to take into account the recent developments like killing of innocent people before finalizing the proposal; and

(c) whether Government propose to take any other step for re-opening of such routes?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) to (c) The Government are of the view that the promotion of people-to-people contacts by all means including making travel between India and neighbouring countries as simple and easy as possible will contribute to the development of friendly ties.

In keeping with this approach, Government have been working with the Government of Bangladesh on increasing and diversifying the transport linkages between the two countries. On July 10, 2001 an Agreement was signed to introduce a bus service between Agartala and Dhaka. An Agreement was also signed on July 12, 2001 to start a passenger train service between India and Bangladesh.

Similarly, on July 9, 2001 Government announced that Pakistani passport holders will be allowed to come by the road route and obtain visas at the check posts at Attari. An additional check post will be opened at Munabao, in Rajasthan. Similar check posts will also be opened at designated points along the International Border and Line of Control in Jammu & Kashmir.

During a meeting with the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, on the sidelines of the recently concluded meeting of the SAARC Standing Committee of Foreign